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## Bullying Prevention and Intervention

### The Hazard – Bullying

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- **Psychological bullying** which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- **Indirect bullying** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- **Cyber bullying** which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

### What Isn't Bullying?

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.
- **One-Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

### Signs of Bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the College through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher or College psychologist), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

### Cedars Christian College's Policy

Cedars Christian College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Cedars Christian College.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-College community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

**Bullying Prevention Strategies**

Cedars Christian College recognises that the implementation of whole-College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within the College:

- a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year
- education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies
- regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the College
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below)
- regular risk assessments of bullying within the College are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate
- education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear
- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

**Specific Bullying Prevention Strategies - Junior School**

- The classroom teacher monitors each student in the classroom, supporting, encouraging, guiding and correcting their peer interactions. This time in Junior School is seen as an opportunity to develop appropriate friendship skills. This encouragement continues in the playground at recess and lunch. Our aim is development of the whole child.
- Teachers respond immediately to reports of bullying with appropriate consequences or referral to the Director of Primary.
- The Director of Primary works with the School Counsellor and classroom teacher to put in place appropriate strategies if the behaviour is ongoing. Time out in the playground or in the office area where they can be supervised.
- Parent Contact is made whenever a student has time out with the Director of Primary.
- Any ongoing concerns are raised with the parents and School Counsellor is involved in recommendations as well as working with the students and the family.
- Students are encouraged through proactive strategies in classroom through our PD/H programs and Biblical studies and Devotions.

**Specific Bullying Prevention Strategies - Middle School**

- Through the Homeroom Teacher, student welfare is closely monitored, promoting the physical, psychological, emotional and academic growth of all students.
- Teachers take allegations of bullying seriously and respond in a timely manner, with the intervention of the Middle School coordinator and the School Counsellor to ensure appropriate follow up measures are put in place for both victim, the perpetrator and the bystander including support, discipline, parent communication, education, preventative strategies and restorative justice.
- Use of behaviour management cards to monitor ongoing or repetitive issues.
- Look at cyber safety and cyber bullying through iPad education programs and Chapel sessions.
- Proactive sessions to raise awareness of the consequences of bullying for the bully, victim and bystander in PDHPE lessons and programs such as REACH and the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

**Specific Bullying Prevention Strategies - Senior College**

- The pastoral care system is used to promote the physical, psychological and emotional safety of all students.
- All allegations of bullying are responded to in a timely manner with appropriate follow up, support, discipline, communication, education and prevention strategies.
- Students are encouraged to reflect on the nature of bullying from the perspective of the bully, the bullied and the bystander through programs such as REACH, in PDHPE classes and in Pastoral Care discussions.
- Pastoral support to deal with the consequences of bullying, including year advisors, counsellor, chaplain, the Director of Secondary and the Welfare Assistant.

- Involvement in various Anti-Bullying campaigns such as the No Way! program to raise awareness of preventative measures.

### Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the College's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the College
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the College psychologist
- informing a student's year co-ordinator
- informing the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

### Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the College:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- **The "Method of Shared Concern" Approach (Pikas)**
- **The "No Blame" Approach (Maines & Robinson)**

*These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.*

- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

### Bullying and Other Support Services

The following support services are available to students and staff:

#### *Youth Liaison Officers*

Youth Liaison Officers are NSW Police Force members who are responsible for administering the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW). They are responsible for delivering cautions, referring children to youth justice conferences, and implementing strategies to reduce crime by juveniles in the community.

The Youth Liaison Officer allocated to Cedars Christian College is Constable Scott Burgess. The Youth Liaison Officer can be contacted on 42325599.

#### *School Liaison Police*

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. School Liaison Police are a point of contact for the College community and the NSW Police Force. Our students are encouraged to contact the School Liaison police if they have any concerns.

Our School Liaison Police Officer is Constable Scott Burgess. The School Liaison Police Officer can be contacted on 42325599.

#### *Other Support Services*

Cedars Christian College also provides access to **Counselling Services (Student)**.

### Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible to:

- model appropriate, respectful and supportive behaviour at all times

- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to speak with the College if they believe their child is being bullied.

**Signage**

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

**Implementation**

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/guardian education and information
- effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the College community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

**Discipline for Breach of Policy**

Where a staff member breaches this policy Cedars Christian College will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.